

LIBRARY

REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

SEATON (DEVON) URBAN COUNCIL

1937

REPORT FOR YEAR 1937.

GENTLEMEN,—

I present a Report of the Public Health and Sanitary Condition of the Seaton Urban District during the year 1937. It is drafted on the lines required by the Ministry of Health according to their instructions.

1. Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area (in acres)	-	-	-	1190.43 Acres.
Population (Census 1931 adjusted)	-	-	-	2351.
Number of Inhabited Houses (1937)	-	-	-	875.
Rateable Value (to Christmas, 1937)	-	-	-	£28,416.
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	-	-	-	£110.

Seaton is a small residential Seaside Town and Health Resort. It is the nearest Devonshire Watering Place to London. The great natural beauty of Seaton Bay, of the Country in the vicinity, and the salubrious air, attract a large number of Visitors, especially during holiday times. The Trade of the Town is almost entirely connected with supplying Lodging Accommodation, Personal Comfort and Amusement for Residents and Visitors. There is also a small Fishing Industry, which affords occupation for a few Fishermen. There is an organised permanent Holiday Camp, and Two Golf Courses.

As a Health Resort, Seaton should be better known, because, owing to the open valley of the estuary of the Axe, it receives free ventilation, thus introducing a tonic element into the mild, South Devon climate. The valley also provides opportunities for exercise on the flat to convalescent patients, and those suffering from cardiac or pulmonary conditions, for whom exertion on a hill is contra-indicated.

Vital Statistics.

(A) <i>Births</i> :	Total, 21	Legitimate	—M. 11 ;	F. 10.
(B) <i>Deaths</i> :	,, 19	-	M. 9 ;	F. 10.

The chief causes of death were:—Apoplexy, 2 ; Heart Disease of the Aged, 9 ; Cancer, 1. There was one death amongst Infants.

Public Health Act (1925), except Sections 21 and 44, and Part v., By Order of the M.O.H.

3. Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

1. WATER.

The Water Supply is very satisfactory.

2. SCAVENGING.

This is done by the Council. House Refuse is removed 3 times a week, and Trade Refuse daily if required. The main streets are swept daily, and are kept very clean and tidy. Wire Refuse receptacles are provided on the Sea Front, and elsewhere, for Public Use.

An effective Incinerator has been installed during the year for all refuse, and a Motor Refuse Cart.

3. SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA

(including Extracts from the Sanitary Inspector's Report for 1937.)

House to house inspection of dwelling houses (Housing of Working Class Act, 1909) has been done as far as necessary.

Number of Houses found unfit for habitation	-	0
„ „ Statutory Notices served	-	0
„ „ Informal Notices to remedy effects	-	0
„ „ New Drains Laid	- - -	25
Inspection of Cowsheds, Dairies and Milkshops		Quarterly
„ „ Bakehouses (5)	- - -	Frequently
„ „ Slaughter-houses	- - -	„

4. PREMISES WHICH CAN BE CONTROLLED BY BYE-LAWS OR REGULATIONS.

These include Cowsheds, Dairies and Milkshops, Slaughter-houses, and Bakehouses. All these places were frequently inspected, and were found clean and sanitary. There are no Common Lodging Houses in the district.

4. Housing.

Number of New Houses erected during the Year :

(a) Total 14.

(b) With State Assistance, under the Housing Acts :

(1) By the Local Authority	-	-	0
(2) By other Persons or Bodies	-	-	0
(3) By the Local Authority under the 1925 Acts			0

1. Inspection of Dwelling Houses.

(1) Number of Dwelling Houses found to be in such a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for habitation	- - -	0
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(2) Number of Dwelling Houses found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation - - - - - *nil.*

2. Remedy of effects during the year without service of formal notice :

(1). Number of Defective Dwelling Houses rendered fit, in consequence of Informal Action by the Local Authority or their Officers - - - - - *nil.*

3. Action under Statutory Powers :

(a) (1) Number of Statutory Notices served - - - - - 0
Number of Houses which Owners declared intention to close - - - - - 0

(b) Proceedings Under Public Health Act :

(1) Number of Dwelling Houses in which defects were remedied after Formal Service of Notice - - - - - 0
(a) By Owners - - - - - 0
(b) By Local Authority, in default of Owners - - - - - 0

(c) Proceedings under Sections 11, 14 and 15 of the Housing Act, 1925 :

(1). Number of Dwelling Houses in which Closing Orders were made - - - - - 0
(2). Number of Dwelling Houses Demolished - - - - - 0

5. Inspection and Supervision of Food.

The bulk of the Milk Supply is produced in the district. A small quantity is brought from the neighbouring village of Axmouth. There are 12 Registered Cowkeepers with 11 Dairies and 4 Milkshops, and 1 Registered Purveyor of Milk whose Cowsheds are not situated in the district. All in the district have been regularly inspected, and were found clean and sanitary. In the Seaton District, the Cows are kept out at grass for the greater part of the day all the year round, and Milkers are supplied with the Aids to Cleanliness which are required. The provisions of the Milk and Dairies Order (1926) are observed. The C. C. has undertaken to be the Supervising Authority for the Veterinary Inspection of Dairy Cows.

Two of our leading Dairymen have a Licence to purvey Certified Milk.

(b) MEAT.

The Sanitary Inspector is the Council's Officer under the Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1904, and inspects Meat at the time of Slaughter. The Butchers' Shops are kept clean and well ventilated. Joints of Meat, when waiting delivery to Customers, are protected from contamination by coverings of Gauze or Linen Cloth. The Shop Windows are provided with Glass Fronts. There is no Public Abattoir. Licensed Slaughter Houses, 2 — inspected frequently, and found kept clean and sanitary.

Incidence of Sickness.

1ST QUARTER —

General Health was fairly good. There were a few epidemics discovered, chiefly Influenza of a mild variety.

2ND QUARTER —

General Health was good, all epidemics having subsided.

3RD QUARTER —

In spite of a large influx of visitors, the General Health was good, and there was no water shortage during the summer.

4TH QUARTER —

General health was exceptionally good.

No cases of Puerperal Fever reported during the year, and four of Pneumonia.

2. General Provision of Health Services for the Area.

1. HOSPITALS provided or subsidised by the Local Authority, or by the County Council.

A. (1) Fever. Cases of Enteric Fever, Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria are received at the County Council's Isolation Hospital, at Whipton, Exeter.

(2) Small Pox. No local provision. The C. C. has undertaken to provide accommodation for any cases from the Seaton district.

B. (1) Tuberculosis. The C.C.'s Sanatoria at Ivybank, Exeter, and Hawkmoor, near Bovey Tracey, receive cases from this district.

(2) Maternity and Children. Only the Union Infirmary, at Honiton.

(3) General. There is no Hospital provision for poor persons in the district. General and Special Hospital Treatment is obtained in Exeter at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, the Eye Infirmary, and the Princess Elizabeth Hospital for Crippled Children, or in the Union Infirmary at Honiton.

(4) There is no Institutional Provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants and homeless children, except such as is provided at the Union Infirmary, Honiton.

2. AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

(a) For Infectious Cases. No local provision. Ambulance from Whipton Isolation Hospital fetches cases of infectious disease accepted for admission to that Institution.

(b) For Non-Infectious and Accident Cases. The East Devon Motor Ambulance, provided by the Red Cross and St. John Societies, is available. It is stationed at Honiton (Telephone No. 33 Honiton), and is supported by Voluntary Contributions and Fees charged for its use. I am informed that it is not self-supporting, as the scale of charges is very moderate, and much lower than the rate charged for similar Ambulances in the Exeter district. The Ambulance is managed by a Committee of the V.A.D.

There is now also an Ambulance of the Axminster and District Division of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, stationed at Axminster.

3. CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

(a) Maternity and Child Welfare. No local centre. The Voluntary Centre which existed for several years was closed in 1924, on account of the small attendance of mothers and children.

(b) A Lady Health Visitor appointed by the C.C. works in the district. She is officially notified of all Births, and visits the mothers at their homes; and gives instructions and advice. She is also Official School Nurse.

4. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.

The M.O.H. and Sanitary Inspector: Part-time Officers. Half Salaries paid by C.C. The Sanitary Inspector is also Surveyor.

5. PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME.

(a) General. The Seaton Nursing Association employs a District Nurse approved by the C.C. She attends Maternity and Non-Infectious Cases, and her Services are available for the Sick Poor.

(b) For Infectious Cases. No Local Provision.

6. MIDWIVES.

The District Nurse is the only R.M.

7. LEGISLATION IN FORCE.

(a) Bye-laws and Regulations in force dealing with Building, Cowsheds, Dairies and Milkshops, Slaughter Houses, Nuisances and Common Lodging Houses.

(b) Adoptive Acts. P.H. Amendment Act (1907) Parts ii., iii., iv., Sections 52-60, 62-66, 68, ; Part x., Sections 92-94. By Order of the L.G.B., to take effect from November 15th, 1909. Also Part vi., By Order of the M.O.H., May 31st, 1923. Also Part vii., Sections 82, 83 (Seashores and Promenades), May 29th, 1926, and the

(c) ADULTERATION.

The Sale of Food and Drugs Act is administered by the C.C., through the Police.

6. Prevalence, and Control Over, Infectious Disease.

Notifiable Infectious Diseases were somewhat prevalent in the early part of 1937, e.g., there were eight cases of mild scarlet fever; some of them so mild that they were not diagnosed until the peeling stage of the more severe cases, which could not be properly nursed or isolated at home, and four were sent to the Exeter Isolation Hospital. There were three cases of Diphtheria, of which one was imported, and the second was a carrier only. The C.C. undertakes Bacteriological Examinations, which are freely used by local practitioners. The Seaton U.D.C. maintains a small emergency stock of Diphtheria Antitoxin for the poor.

Vaccination. About 50% of Infants born are vaccinated. The average should be higher, because, if a case of Smallpox should be reported, there is a grave risk of an Epidemic. This has been the usual average for many years past. No Primary Vaccinations, or Re-Vaccinations, were performed by the M.O.H. during the year under the Public Health (Prevention of Smallpox) Regulations, 1917.

In all cases of Notifiable Infectious Disease, the Sanitary Inspector disinfects Sickrooms, Bedding, Clothes, etc. at the termination of the Illness. Disinfection is also done in cases of Tuberculosis, when temporary residents vacate lodgings. Also in Medical and Surgical cases, when Disinfection seems desirable.

There are no facilities for the cleansing and disinfection of verminous persons and their belongings, and it has not been necessary to take any action in such matters.

Tuberculosis. New Cases and Mortality during 1937.

AGE PERIODS	NEW CASES		NEW CASES	
	NON-RESPIRATORY		RESPIRATORY	
	M	F		F
0				
1				
5				
15	1		1	
25				
35				
45			1 (died)	
55				
65 and upwards				2

Notifiable Disease (other than Tuberculosis) during Year 1937.

DISEASE	Total Cases Notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Small Pox	-	-	
Scarlet Fever	-	-	8
Enteric Fever (including Paratyphoid)			
Puerperal Pyrexia	-	-	
Puerperal Fever	-	-	
Pneumonia	-	-	4
Other diseases generally notifiable (Chicken Pox)	-	-	1
Other diseases notifiable locally :			
Erysipelas	-	-	3
Encephalitis Lethargica			
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	-	-	

It has not been necessary to take any action under these Regulations as no Tuberculosis Employee in the Milk Trade came under observation.

No action has been necessary.

7. Factories and Workshops.

There are no Factories in the district, and no Offensive Trades are carried on. A Register is kept. On December 31st, 1937, the registered number of Premises was 25, viz.: Factories (including five Bakehouses), 17 ; Workshops, 8. These are connected with the various small Industries, and the Building Trades, usually found in a small Town. All were inspected during the year, and found kept according to the Regulations. There are no "home-workers" in the district, and no labour is imported for Fruit or Pea Picking.

General Observations.

The weather for the whole year was generally good, and remarkably equable. There were no sudden or great changes at any time. The rainfall, amounting to nearly 41 inches, was about the average ; and no shortage was experienced. The holiday periods were free from any excessive rain, and the rainfall was fairly evenly distributed over the year.

Brilliant sunshine was the rule ; and Seaton was high in the list for Devon and the South-Western Districts. There were few sunless days, and these were in the winter months.

Temperature was uniform, with little variation ; and the ground was dry and warm—as was also the sea—during the holiday period.

Little or no fog was experienced, and there was not a great deal of high wind.

Visibility was good at all times, and reliable — especially for long distances.

There are plenty of Out-door Amusements for all, including Hockey, Cricket, Football, Golf, Tennis, Bowls, Fishing, Hunting, Etc.

(Signed), A. KENNEDY,

B.A., M.B. (Cantab), M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,
Medical Officer of Health.